



Funny Childhood Memories & Stories ⚡🧑 (with Martin) Episode Transcript

Introduction

Hello listeners, welcome back to Luke's English Podcast. In this episode you can hear a conversation about childhood covering various aspects of this topic and it's full of funny stories and also the language that we use to tell stories about the past, to describe family life, to talk about growing up and school days and a lot more. I think it's a really good one and you will enjoy it a lot but I had a podcaster's nightmare recording this episode.

A podcaster's nightmare. What do you think a podcaster's nightmare could be? Well what happened is that I did the recording, everything was fine, then I started to edit it. I got the files, started to edit them and then I discovered that during the recording the wrong microphone was selected.

I had the wrong microphone selected in the recording software that I use. So my voice, instead of being captured by my normal podcasting microphone, it was actually being recorded by the inbuilt microphone on my laptop. The

sound was very muffled, right, so talking a bit like this, so very muffled and also you could hear the sound of wind occasionally blowing across the microphone because I was recording with my window open because it was such a hot day.

So it was a bit like this. Basically it was virtually unusable as a recording and I was so frustrated I nearly bit off my own leg in frustration because there's nothing worse than capturing some spontaneous moments of quality conversation only to learn that it is completely unusable. So in my desperation I turned to AI and I used an AI tool to try to fix it, to try to recover it and amazingly it worked really quite well.

So it's definitely usable and publishable but it's not perfect and I just wanted to flag this up. So I think what the AI did is it boosted and fixed my recording, somehow changing my muffled and windy microphone into something that sounded a bit like a normal studio microphone. It's incredibly clever.

So it picked up my voice and fixed it but it only applied those changes when I was actually saying words that it recognised. Anything else, any other sounds I made including laughter, sound effects or even some words that the AI couldn't quite identify, all those other things got completely removed and cut by the AI. Now the result is okay but it's not perfect.

My mic now sounds pretty warm and full as you will hear when the recording starts in a moment but it's still not quite as clear as I want. For example sometimes the ends of words get cut off slightly or other little things. Now maybe this message isn't necessary and you won't really notice.

I found the end result basically good enough but not really satisfying. So the point is this, if you find me a bit harder to understand than usual it's the microphone problem okay. As I said the ends of words seem a little bit cut off, some of the clarity is lost and you'll probably hear it, it's going to start in just a second, you'll hear it and you'll think that I'm overreacting but for me it's a big deal.

Good quality audio is really important for my podcast. I'm always doing my best to present clear audio because I want to reduce barriers between you and the English you're hearing. I want to make sure that English, the English you're listening to is right there and is comprehensible especially in a fairly fast and natural online chat like this which can be difficult anyway.

So just to let you know if you find it a bit tricky to hear everything I'm saying that's because of my microphone. I mean if you find it a bit tricky to identify every single word I'm saying it's the microphone okay. So there's no need to write any comments about that particular issue I have answered it here.

There is a full script for this conversation which can help you but anyway that's all I wanted to say. I hope you enjoy the episode and feel free to write and tell me that actually the audio is absolutely fine and I'm completely overthinking it. One more thing there's a premium episode for this with a selection of vocabulary taken from the conversation and given the normal premium treatment.

So if you are a plebster check it out you'll find it in your premium feed. It should be available now. This is a great way to convert listening to a fun conversation into actively using it as a resource for effectively building your vocabulary.

So if you're a premium listener check it out if you're not a premium listener you can get started by going to teacherluke.co.uk/premium

This is the end of my pre-intro kind of disclaimer thing about the microphone now without any further ado let's kind of get started properly and you can now notice you can now tell me that the microphone is absolutely fine and I'm totally overthinking it. Okay right then let's get started and here we go.

Conversation

I'm absolutely boiling hot and my brain isn't really working properly and there's a certain temperature I think it's about as an English person I think it's about 16 degrees C above that temperature my brain starts to melt. I'm joking

of course I think it's probably something more like 17 degrees maybe but anyway it's super hot here because there's a heat wave in this part of the world. I'll talk more about that it's fascinating I'm sure you can't wait to hear more about how uncomfortable I am as I record this but anyway listeners hello this episode is going to be a conversation about childhood and there'll be anecdotes and memories and funny things and difficult things all related to being a child school days growing up.

I really hope you enjoy listening to this and that you can try to notice the usual bits of vocabulary that will pop up as we talk during this episode. My guest today is Martin Aaron and just like last time we're going to turn the tables and Martin is actually going to be as well as being the guest he's actually going to be interviewing me on my own podcast right. Do you understand the concept he's the guest but he's also the host and I'm the guest on my own podcast if that's confusing it really shouldn't be I think maybe I'm confusing it by trying to explain it it's fairly simple.

Martin has prepared some questions about childhood for me to answer so I feel very sort of flattered and privileged again to be a guest on my own show we did this previously a few episodes ago when we had a conversation about food. I think this is a great concept that Martin has come up with just pick a topic prepare some questions and see what rambling anecdotes I come out with especially vocabulary as well let's see what vocabulary emerges on this particular topic. I would love to ask I'd love to throw the questions back to Martin sometimes we will see I'm sure we've got loads of things to say on this subject let's talk to Martin now hello Martin how are you doing hey Luke how you doing I'm very hot like you it's um extremely hot today but I believe not as hot as Paris what is your temperature it is currently uh 10 44 a.m right that's that's the time that's not the temperature it's not 10 044 degrees feels like it yeah yeah um no it's 10 44 in the morning okay everybody and currently it's 40 degrees is that possible yes it is no wait a minute I'm trying to work out I'm trying to understand the uh the uh weather app on my phone so it's no it's 30 degrees but it feels like 38 gosh wow yeah I I would like to remark you have so you've you've been shorn since I last saw you you've had a haircut is this weather related I look exactly the same but you you look you look younger you look sleeker do I really yeah maybe it's not just that I'm just

sweaty that's the sleekness I'm just shiny because it's sweat but I you know no no yeah yeah I've shaved I shaved uh I don't know a couple of days ago well it's obviously the stubble is coming back but yeah I have to shave off I I you know any kind of beard growth has to be shaven because um when it's hot I just can't handle having a big beard but you've got the full beard yes the beard may have to go soon you um I see you have a nice breeze there your hair just ruffled in the in the wind yeah so it's kind of strange weather where it's very very hot but there's the occasional sort of bit of breeze that comes through the uh open window which is right in front of me so it's kind of breezy boiling I feel like there could be a thunderstorm or something yeah yeah well that's what we've got here I've also got a fan a very small fan here which is helping me and I'm not sitting on a chair next to me trying to keep me cool not really doing a very good job have you seen ace ventura 2 when nature calls no it's probably what happens basically jim carrey in that film is a scene where he's um inside a rhino so it's it's uh yeah uh it's set in um is it africa is it the australian it's i think it's africa it's set in in somewhere in the in africa right and it's hot yeah that's it's really hot and he's spying on someone and his method of spying on this person is that he's he's got this elect this kind of uh robotic rhino and he's inside it controlling it okay and he's moving towards these two dodgy people who are having a secret conversation and there's he's like don't mind me i'm just a friendly rhino and he goes over and he's inside the rhino and obviously it's boiling hot inside this mechanical rhino and he's like oh it's kind of hot in these rhinos and he's got a little fan and the fan just dies uh and then the joke is he gets hotter and hotter and hotter and he has to like peel off more and more layers of clothing so i feel like jim carrey in a rhino in a mechanical rhino somewhere in a hot part of africa and then that what happens next is that he has to actually get out of the rhino and the only way to get out is to climb through a small hole at the back and there's a family of tourists who are on on safari and they're like oh wow look there's a rhino and then jim carrey pops out of the rhino a hole in the rhino's bum basically and they're oh wow the mother rhino is giving birth uh but it's ace ventura the sweaty ace ventura they're all horrified um so yeah that's that's what's going on with me that's how you feel yeah in a nutshell basically yeah i feel like jim carrey stuck inside a hot mechanical rhino um okay so so this week last time we talked about i asked you lots of questions about food and uh this time we're doing childhood and we should thank one of your listeners

who suggested this in the in the comments it was i've got their name here they they they're using login is hunz edu so thank you hunz edu okay that's spelled h-u-n-z-e-d-u so i don't know is that someone who's whose name is edu and they're calling themselves hunz like honey you write that sometimes yeah h-u-n-z-h-u-n-z yeah hunz yeah is it someone called zedu who's from hungary and so the h-u-n-e-d-u is hungary and then their name is zedu i don't know is it someone who works in education is the edu for education that's their login i don't i don't know maybe they could tell us in the comments but thank you very much anyway to hunz edu for the topic of childhood, which is what we're going with today.

So should we kick off? Yeah. That was the earliest point then is what are your earliest memories? What's the first thing you remember? Um, right. I have loads of early memories, but the first, the very first, the sort of earliest thing I can remember is, uh, being on the floor near the carpet.

I get this, you know, when I try and think back as far as I can go, um, the earliest thing I can remember is this sensation of being down on the floor near the carpet. Like this brown carpet that we used to have in the living room in the house that, um, we lived in, in, in Ealing in West London. And I have this like weird distant memory of the carpet and the feeling of the carpet, like quite a nice feeling of a kind of, um, I dunno, like a rough, but pleasant feeling of the carpet.

I don't know if I'm making these memories up or not, but this is kind of what I think of while the music of the Beatles plays on my parents. Um, uh, stereo system and the speakers obviously were up there. So the sound of rubber soles specifically that albums coming down, uh, from above while I'm down near this brown carpet with this feeling of this brown carpet, and every time I listened to all the songs from rubber soul, I have this weird carpet sort of proximity memory that comes to me strange.

Isn't it? Okay. What, what, can I ask what decade this would be for a brown carpet could be kind of eighties leftover from the seventies. Yeah.

Is that about right? I think we had a lot of brown carpet in our house. I'm a bit older than you, but there was still a lot of brown and orange. A lovely combination, isn't it? Dark brown and orange.

Yeah. And, uh, carpets. Yeah.

And, and yeah, a lot of that stuff and a dark brown carpet with a bright orange rug on it, you know? Yes. Yeah. And bathrooms as well in the seventies and eighties had a lot of those kinds of colours, like a bath and toilet and sink set that were a kind of lurid orange or kind of green colour and tiles on the walls that were kind of green or orange as well.

That's quite normal in the seventies. At 18, you'll come back now, isn't it? Is it, it's probably fashionable again. I think we had all this furniture in the seventies called Ercole, which was also rounded edges and very seventies.

And then by the time of the eighties, it was absolutely revolting. You know, we thought it was disgusting. And so we got rid of it all.

And now you see it in like, um, you know, exclusive fashionable boutiques and our horrible settee sofa sells for like 2000 pounds now. Oh God. Yeah.

It's, it's weird. Isn't it the way these fashion trends go around? What, what, what is considered the lowest form of taste is now considered the highest form of taste. Yeah.

It's a funny thing. So, yeah, I remember being close to the carpet, hearing the music of the Beatles, um, and I've got loads of other memories that I could mention. Like just holidays, you know, memories of holidays in the South of France.

Um, although my, my, my mom used to organise the holidays. Um, and most of the time she would, um, like book some cottage in the middle of nowhere in England, Wales or Scotland. Uh, so we, we had a lot of times, um, just kind of like in the, in the remotest part of the British countryside somewhere, but then also we would have these holidays down in the South of France and I'd

remember distinctly the, uh, the journey down to wherever we typically we'd, we'd go to a place near Perpignan in France, a little town in the foothills of the Pyrenees called Serre.

Um, lovely little spot. And to get down there, we had to drive down to Dover in the car. So I remember my dad packing up the Ford Escort that we had, red Ford Escort with a roof rack on it.

We'd all drive down to, uh, to, to Dover and then we'd put the car on a ferry. So we'd all get on the ferry and the car would go on the ferry too. And this was always so exciting to me as a kid.

Just, I love the idea of putting transport on other transport. You know, that's just so exciting. So just the moment where you drive the car up the ramp onto the ferry and you park the car in the ferry and you get out of the car and then you climb up some metal steps and then you, then you're in the, in the ferry and then the ferry is going across the English channel.

And then you think, but the car is down below in this ferry as well. That's amazing. And then when you get to the other side, you go and get back in the car, drive off the ferry on another metal ramp.

And then you drive to a train station and get in a queue of other cars and eventually drive the car onto, uh, the train. Yeah. So you could drive the car.

Yeah. Drive the car onto the train and there's like, I don't know if this is still a thing, but the trains allowed cars. There were like, um, uh, train cars that could hold cars.

Am I making any sense? And so you went on, you went to Perpignan on a train, in your car, the car, you'd leave the car parked on one of the trains. And then you would, then we would go into a sleeper car on the train where we had a little cabin because to travel by train from North to South of France takes a long time, or it did in those days. It wasn't a high speed train.

That was possible. Yeah. God, it's so windy suddenly.

Is that still a thing? Um, you can put, I don't know if your car, you can't even take your bike on a train in the UK. Most of the time take yourself on a train in the UK. That's so crowded.

Um, but yeah, yeah. I don't know if it's still a thing. Um, but it wasn't a high speed train.

It took a long time for the train to travel all the way down the country. And so we would be in a sleeper, uh, uh, carriage. And that was also a very early memory as well as of being in this sleeper carriage and the excitement of the sort of sofa, uh, uh, bunk, the sofa benches that would fold and transform into three different bunk beds on three levels.

So cool. I think, I dunno, as a kid, I bunk beds. That was just exciting, wasn't it? I always wanted one, even though there was no need for one.

And my, my sisters all had their own bedroom, but bunk beds were exciting. Bunk beds on a train. Oh my God.

Not only that, but bunk beds on trains that are that normally are sofas where you're sitting and like, you're having some food on a little table. And then at some point, like, right, let's change this into a bedroom. And there are leather straps and you pull the straps and the, and the benches kind of go, some of them come down and then you've got beds and the beds are like when you're a little kid, the beds are so high up, you know, there's like one bed here.

Okay. Another bed there. And then there's like another bed, impossibly high up there where your, your dad's going to sleep or something.

Um, yeah. So those were great. Exciting.

I still can't get over. I can't get over. Car on a train has blown my mind.

I, um, I once took a train, I mean, as an adult, so this is embarrassing because I had no idea, but I got a train from Copenhagen to Hamburg in Germany. Yeah. And, um, I never given it a moment's thought, but I got on this train and then suddenly we were being told to get off the train and so everybody got off the train, I still didn't really know what was happening and the train seemed to be in some sort of station and then everyone got off at this station and we all went up some stairs and then I came out on the deck of a ship and the train has gone onto a ferry and this big boat is now going on a, you know, an hour long journey across this way.

What a train on a boat. And then you live in Germany. Yeah.

My geography was not great, but I had no clue that that's how you, how it worked. So I'm suddenly I'm standing at sea on a deck of a boat, but you know, I wasn't a small child, this wasn't an early memory. I was in my thirties or something, so that was going to happen.

Yeah, but wait a minute. A train on a boat. He's telling me genuinely they didn't put the whole train on the boat.

Did they? They just kind of like, yeah, it drives into this huge ferry and then it comes up the other end and off it goes again. Shut up. How is that possible? The train trains too long.

Well, it was either a short train or a long boat. Wow. That's brilliant.

Wow. I've never heard of that before. I mean, how brilliant.

I mean that, that yeah. Transport on transport. This is brilliant.

Car on a boat, car on a train, train on a boat. We're going to change the topic of this week's episode. It's not about childhood anymore.

It's about transport on transport. Do you remember that time when you put a helicopter on a plane? Oh God, what we need to complete this. One of us needs a story about putting a train or a boat on a car.

That would be the ultimate way to round this off. Um, yeah, so, okay. Early memories.

I've got other early memories as well. I've got a memory of being really terrified as a kid. Uh, really early memory and it's very vague, but I do remember it.

And my, my mom and dad and my uncle, uh, will still tell me this, uh, again and again. And I do remember it, although I know that, um, you know, maybe childhood memories, do we actually remember them or do we just kind of like construct the memory based on the stories that we've been told by other people? It's hard to tell. Isn't it really? But I honestly genuinely do think I can remember this one a little bit.

So it was a, it was this train. Okay. Again, train transport.

We're back to that again. Um, I was, so I was staying at my grandparents, my mom's parents. Uh, my uncle and aunt were there too.

My brother and my dad and everything and bedtime. And I woke up sort of fairly soon after having gone to bed, very, very upset, like having a, a, a, a sort of like just crying and like really, really bothered, um, crying and screaming. And no one could understand what was the matter with me.

They couldn't work it out. Or I was absolutely sort of beside myself, like completely hysterical. Like little kids can, can do that.

Sometimes they're like night terrors or especially around sleeping. They can sort of snap into this thing called like a night terror. And, uh, I was, it was like something out of a horror film or something.

I was like screaming and pointing and they couldn't work it out. And eventually they worked out that it was this kind of plastic toy train big enough that you could sit on. The little kid could sit on and you know, Thomas, the

tank engine, right? So Thomas, the tank engine is just for any listeners who don't know.

It's like a famous TV show. Uh, and it's about all these trains, but they've got faces. So the trains have got faces on the front and they all kind of talk to each other and they've got different personalities.

So this plastic train was a kind of cheap copy of a Thomas. The T it wasn't an official Thomas, the tank engine toy. It was just some other cheap toy that had the same idea that they put a face on the front of this train and this train plastic train with a creepy face on the front, absolutely freaked me out and terrified me.

And, um, it caused me to have this massive sort of meltdown. Um, yeah, but I just remember getting very malicious, terrifying vibes from this evil train. It just seemed to be pure evil to me.

Um, and I had a huge crying fit and it was just, I remember it was dark and like everyone came out of their bedrooms to kind of try and help me calm down. No one could do it. And I, I only stopped crying and calm down when the train was actually removed from the house entirely.

I was put into the garage and then I, then I calmed down, but I just couldn't calm down with that train in the house. So there you go. That's a weird one.

Isn't it? And ever since then, you've, you hated Thomas, the tank engine. Did you love Thomas? I just don't like cheap copies of Thomas, the tank engine. Your, your aesthetic taste was offended by this vulgarity of this cheap, official merchandise.

It's not official merchandise. Uh, but I mean, I kind of, to an extent, I kind of feel that it wasn't unreasonable of me to be so terrified of this thing, because when you think about it, a train with a face on the front, that's quite strange and quite creepy, isn't it? And I think, yeah. Okay.

The weird things, aren't they? My little nephew saw a documentary about a town in, uh, I think Alaska or Canada. Not sure which, where she's on the migratory route of polar bears. So every year these polar bears come through this town and they go through people's bins looking for food and they bang on the windows and, um, all this.

And my nephew at a very young age had seen this absolutely, absolutely terrified him. But he, he was Australian. My, my sister lived in Australia.

So the chances of him finding a polar bear, he came to visit in England once. And, um, we went for a walk, just me and him and he was only tiny. He was, so I was holding his hand and it snowed.

He'd never seen snow before. So this was all very exciting. So we went out to look at the snow.

And as we were walking across this field, I felt his hand suddenly tighten in my hand as he, he had a thought and he said, uncle Martin, are there, are there polar bears in England? No, no, it's fine. Oh, okay. He relaxed again.

Oh, he was quite old before he stopped being scared of polar bears. Well, again, I sort of understand what was his name? What's his name? My nephew, my nephew, John. So I understand John because polar bears, yeah, you should be scared of polar bears because they're, you know, extremely terrifying, dangerous predators.

So, you know, but obviously you can't say that to John. Can you like, you know, you can't say to John when he's crying in bears, like, yeah, yeah, yeah. You should be scared of polar bears.

They're really dangerous. And if there is one at the window, then, you know, you should definitely run screaming. Yeah.

You can't say that to a child. You have to say, Oh, don't worry. There are no polar bears, but thankfully in Australia, yes.

No polar bears, plenty of other dangerous animals, but no polar bears. So nothing to worry about there. So I'm moving on.

You mentioned, uh, that you grew your brown carpet was in Ealing. So that's a part of West London. So you, you're very cool.

You were born in West London and, uh, how many, is that where you lived your whole childhood? Where, how many places did you live? Where did you grow up? So, um, I was born actually in high Wickham. So even cooler, not, not really. Um, high Wickham is just as, I don't know, just a fairly average town just outside London.

But I was born there, but we didn't really live there. But then, yeah, fairly quickly, uh, fairly soon after I was born, we did move into West London. So basically yes, West London.

And then, uh, when I was about nine, uh, we moved to the West Midlands. Um, um, tiny little village in the middle of nowhere, somewhere vaguely between Birmingham and Coventry, right on the edge of Solihull where the border of Solihull and Warwickshire in this tiny little sort of tiny little village that just had one pub, one playground, one little shop with a post office in it. That, that was it.

And lots of lanes and fields, um, and stuff like that. So going from, you know, like I guess zone four or zone five of London, uh, to just what felt like the middle of the middle of nowhere, like taking the bus to school, past farms and things like that. Um, yeah.

So that, that in terms of childhood, it was mainly those two places. So somewhere kind of fairly urban and then somewhere really quite rural. And do you remember, did you like it at the time? Did you, did you, were you happy with that change or did you want to stay in, in the city? So I wasn't really bothered by the environment.

That was fine. In fact, I was really happy. We were happy with that because there was a big garden, you know, in the house, the house had a nice big garden with a, uh, the garden went down.

And at the bottom of the garden, it kind of was all wild. And there was like, there were trees, not a tiny little wood, you know, where you could go in and explore and that was brilliant, but the tricky thing was starting a new school, you know, that was horrible. I mean, starting a school already was difficult for me when I started, when I went to primary school in London, they had to drag me screaming into the building, you know, literally like I was doing everything I could do to actually not physically go in and they had to pull me in and I was crying.

How pathetic, you know, I think it's pretty common, 28 years old. I wasn't, I wasn't your first teaching job, but I was nine. So I started a new primary school, um, in the countryside with loads of local kids and they sort of took the piss out of my ex and stuff because they all had these, you know, a cockney London kid.

Do we go blind? Make it what's going on here was right. What time's lunch? What? There ain't no lunch packed lunch. What the bloody hell is all this about? And, um, and they were like, Oh, you know, what's that accent? You're from, where are you from? You're from London.

You know, they're all sort of Brummie. And so I didn't have a London accent at the time. I spoke more or less like the way I do now, except not as deep, you know, generally high pitch.

Yeah. It's just imagine Luke's English podcasts, but at a higher pitch and much shorter because I didn't have the same vocabulary that I do now. Um, but no, they used to take the Mickey out of my accent and that was horrible.

I felt very kind of, uh, uh, I dunno, homesick's not the word, but I just felt very nervous and anxious going those, those first few weeks of starting a new school, it was horrible, but you will know all about that because you, you

went to a, you went to a boarding school, which is a totally different thing. And that, that, that must've been quite difficult to get used to. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. But, um, I think it's off, isn't there's a feeling of fear when you start a new school, surely all children have that terrible feeling in your stomach of, of that first day in a new playground, nothing will ever be so terrifying again in your life.

It is. I mean, once you become an adult, starting a new job is not the same. Is it? It's a little bit nervous, but I mean, once you've done that childhood thing of starting a new school and, uh, as I say, I feel like the first break in the playground or the first lunchtime in the playground is a terrifying thing.

Where do you go? Where, where do you, which way there's nowhere to hide? Where do you go? How do you approach other children? Oh God. Yes. It's terrifying.

You just sort of stand there. Did it take you long to get over that? Did you, did you settle down? Did you enjoy that school eventually? Yeah, eventually. I don't know how long, I mean, it helped that there was, there was another kid who started it exactly the same time as me just by coincidence.

And he also had come from London and he lived in the same tiny little village that I lived in. So I did have someone else who was in a similar situation to me. Um, so that helped a bit.

Uh, but no, you know, it took me probably a few months or maybe a year or something to kind of feel like I was, you know, at home there. Um, and then I, then when, then went to secondary school and that was different because I started secondary school at the same time as everyone else in my year. My brother, it was harder for him because he started that secondary school in the second year.

He kind of joined in the middle of the second year and had a really hard trying to kind of like, you know, uh, establish himself and he got picked on by kids and got into a fight and stuff like that. Um, so it was a little easier for me

cause I started at primary school, um, and started secondary school with everyone else. So that, that wasn't so bad.

Yeah. So you went to, my question is here is how many schools did you go to? So you went one in London, then your little primary school locally, and then you went to a bigger secondary school. Yes.

Did you, would you say you enjoyed school? I mean, it was all right. Um, it was okay. I think I kind of kept my head down at school, you know? Um, yeah.

You weren't, you weren't king of the king of the, I don't know what the expression would be top kid. Top dog. Top dog.

No, not really. I mean, leader of the gang. It's like, I feel like American high school is easier for the world to understand because they've seen it ever.

We've all seen the way that school in America is depicted. It's just the same things every time, you know, the metal lockers and there's always the same types of kids, you know, in American high school, it's like, there's basically like this, the, the popular sporty kids, and then there's the mean bully and there's the kind of geeks and it's basically those three categories and for girls, it's a similar story, you know, you've got the sporty kind of pom-pom girls, the cheerleaders and the evil girls who might actually be the cheerleaders too, and then the kind of more ordinary geeky kind of girls. Um, but British school, it's hard to categorise, isn't it really? But no, I wasn't one of the cool kids.

I wasn't really one of the, um, really super clever kids. I wasn't one of the geeky kids. I was somewhere sort of in between all of those things.

Um, yeah. A happy, happy medium. Yes, I think so.

But it was like school to an extent is, it wasn't that rough, but sometimes it is a question of survival because there are bullies around and the kids can be pretty mean to each other and nasty to each other. Right. Um, so yeah, I, I

feel like I've kind of kept my head down and didn't really have a lot of personality at school.

Um, I don't know if that's fair, but I was fairly shy, but I was quite funny. Um, and, uh, yeah. So academically, were you, um, a star or you sort of muddle along or academically? No, I was, again, I was just, just above average, just slightly above average.

And when you consider some of the kids in the school, that doesn't necessarily mean, you know, that they dragged the average down quite, quite a lot. Um, so I was okay. Um, my results from secondary school were all right.

I didn't get an A in any subject. I got five B's three C's and a D okay. Which is fine.

I mean, nothing to really make my parents proud. Um, nothing to shout about, but no terrible failures at the same time. So it was fine.

It was good enough. But you know, the subjects I would probably, I was probably better at where, you know, English and drama actually was one of the ones I was good at. I never actually pursued that.

I didn't do drama studies later, but I was good at drama, English music, um, sociology, sociology, a bit older. Was it? You don't, you do that as like, um, they had that as an, as an option at secondary school. Yeah.

I did it, did it for two years. Oh, cool. So the school play, you mentioned drama.

But the school play is a thing. Yes. How, what, what I was never in a school play.

I think looking back, that might be a regret that I wish I had done something like that, but for some reason, after the nativity play, maybe you should explain to viewers that the nativity plays when you're very young at an infant school, when you're sort of what, three, four years old, something like that at

Christmas, they put on a play about the story of Jesus being born. Do they do that in other countries? I don't know. That would be interesting to know.

Maybe your readers, your listeners could put their comments, but in the UK, we have a nativity play, which all the parents have to go and watch. It's classically terrible. Um, not, not the greatest acting going on some to make sure that all children have a role, obviously there's, there's Mary and Joseph, importantly, some shepherds, there's an angel, but to make sure all the other children have a, have a role.

You might be a Christmas tree, uh, standing at the back. I think that's what I was a Christmas tree. Well, no, I think I was a shepherd.

I think I quite animals, but, but after, after the nativity play, which everybody does, cause everybody is in the nativity play when you're three or four years old. After that, doing a play at school is, is a sort of quite a big thing. What, what was your first play and what was your first role? Oh gosh.

So secondary school. Um, yeah, I was in drama and we actually, with the drama class, we did do a play. It was a Christmas Carol.

Yeah, we did a Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens, and I was tiny Tim. Oh, yes. Well, it's quite an important role.

It's quite a, it's a, it's a, cause I had to die. I think I died on stage. Oh my God.

It is a sad story. No, there's no question. Although, although to be fair, when tiny Tim dies, that is just a sort of, um, a dream, um, in the real world, he doesn't die because Ebenezer Scrooge changes his, his ways and looks after tiny Tim and his family.

Uh, but, um, so there is a sequence though, in which in one of Scrooge's, uh, dreams that your visions that he's been given by one of these ghosts, he sees tiny Tim, um, you know, he observes the tiny Tim has died. So I had to die. I kind of had a coughing fit and fell on the floor.

I remember having a wooden crutch. The drama teacher had a room full of props and I had this wooden crutch and, um, and then I, you know, I had a few lines. God, God bless us everyone.

And then kept coughing and coughing and slowly fell off my chair and fell on the floor. Oh no, he's dead. Oh, um, how old was, how old were you when you were doing this? I must've been about, dunno, 12, 13, something like that.

Great stuff. Yeah. And did you go on to other performances where you later, you became, uh, older characters? Yeah, we did other plays in drama class.

I had, I had to play an old man. I had to play an old man in one of the plays that the, with a group of other kids, we wrote the script, we wrote the play, we practised it, we prepared it. And when we performed it to the rest of the class.

And I was an old man. Uh, but I remember that one of the things that the drama teacher was trying to tell me, he's like, Luke, you're great. You're doing great, but try to act like, try to act like an old man.

I mean, remember old people, uh, you know, they, they can't move very well. They might be like kind of, um, have difficulty standing up and walking. There might be hunched over.

Um, and he said, you know, remember those things, try to do those things. And I think that my performance as an old man was just me walking around with my normal sort of 14 year olds body walking around. Didn't change my voice.

Didn't change my body language or my posture. Um, I just walked around and just deliver the lines and just, you know, expected everyone to remember that I was an old man. It wasn't a good, it wasn't a good acting job at all.

So you never wanted to, didn't, uh, never fancied becoming an actor or. No, I definitely, I would have loved to be, uh, have been an actor or a comedian.

Um, that was always something I secretly would have loved to do, but I just didn't have the confidence or the kind of self-awareness, uh, the maturity to be able to do it properly.

I think it was more, I was shy. I was quite shy, really. I think, yeah, that I, I, although I enjoyed performing and making people laugh, um, there was a certain shyness and a certain sort of reserve that meant that I didn't put myself forward for those things.

Some of the other kids were a lot more, uh, confident and willing to kind of put themselves out there. And I was the kind of kid, the teacher would say, Luke, why don't you do this? I remember that in primary school, whereas I was, the teacher wanted me to play the main character. I think Luke, you should do this.

And I was like, no, no, no, no, no. I really don't, you know, I don't want to, don't want to. And I ended up being a cow or something in the, in the nativity.

Luke, you could be Joseph. I think you should be Joseph Luke. No, no, no.

And then I will, she, you know. So it was your lack of confidence really that held you back. If you'd have been more confident, you could have been the main, the main character.

Perhaps. Yeah. I don't know if it's confidence or modesty or, or, uh, what? Yeah.

But I just wasn't really ambitious. Maybe I wasn't, I didn't have the burning ambition. That leads us nicely to the next question is what, what did you want to do when you were a kid? What did you imagine you would like to be one day? I've never really known what I wanted to do, including even now.

Um, even just moment by moment, what are we going to do now? I don't, I don't know. Um, but, um, I had no idea at all, really, as a little kid, even, I don't remember a time when I wanted to be a fireman or something like that, which is what most little kids will say, like even my son who is nearly three, he

wants to be a fireman because he loves watching fireman Sam on TV and just, you know, he's obsessed with fire and emergencies. Um, but no, I never had that sense.

And then at secondary school, just before you leave, you have to have a meeting with a, um, uh, a careers advisor. He's, you know, you have a one-to-one meeting. Everyone does.

And you sit down, um, and they say, so what would you like to do? Have you got any idea what you'd like to do after school? And, you know, I'd say, well, I, you know, I think I'm going to continue to do a levels of college and stuff like that. And, you know, they're trying to help you decide what subjects you'll do or what your options are. And the only thing I could think of as a career was that I wanted to be the manager of a sports centre.

That was the thing that got written down in my folder that I, like leisure centre manager, uh, the reason for that is just that I liked the, I'm only laughing now. It seems I look rude, but I'm only laughing because we've talked about this before and I know what you're going to say. I don't want your viewers to think that as soon as you said that, I just laughed at your face.

No, of course not. We have talked about that before. We've laughed about this before.

When you, when you invited me onto your podcast, we ended up talking about this. Um, and yeah, I wanted to be a leisure says leisure centre manager, right? So that is, uh, you know, like a sports centre listeners, you know what that means, a sports centre where you can go and do different types of sports. And I think the main reason for that is that at secondary school, again, like between the ages of 11 and 16, I kept my head down and I wasn't particularly interested in the world, but some of my other friends were getting into music and getting into all these different things and kind of wanting to go out even start drinking and all that stuff.

And I was just kind of fairly limited really in my interest of things that I was just into sports. I just wanted to play football all the time. I just loved all kinds of sport, especially sporting equipment.

Uh, for some reason I just loved apparatus, which is what they call it. In school. So when you go to PE class, that's apparatus.

That's what they call it. Yeah. So for example, when you go to PE, which is physical education, which is a class you have, you know, several times a week and you go in, you don't know what sport you're going to be doing that day often.

And you go into the sports hall and the teacher sort of brings out some apparatus and you're like, Oh, what is it? And he's got like a, I don't know what it, what would it be? Just like stuff for playing tennis stuff for play. So a big bag of footballs or some trampolines get wheeled out. And I just loved all the apparatus and the equipment.

And I was just like, Oh, I can't wait to start using the apparatus. I want to get a basketball. I wanted to bounce a basketball and try and score a basket.

I just so just loved all the equipment and all of the different bits of apparatus. So the idea of like, well, I love sport. I love apparatus.

Where is there lots of sport and apparatus? The idea of having access to sporting facilities was very exciting to me. So I wanted to be the manager of a sports centre. Um, and yeah, so the thing that we both laugh about is that of course, there is a TV show that we both know that's not on TV anymore, but anyone of our generation will know, know about it.

And that's called the Brit ass empire, which is a sort of a, it's a sitcom, a typical British sitcom, actually probably really good. I don't know. Was it good? You never really watched that to say, but the main reason it would have been good is red dwarf.

Exactly. So the main character was played by, um, what's his name? I don't know. He used to live near me.

I used to see him in shops and things. I do know his name. Why can't I think of Chris Barry? Of course, Chris Barry.

Um, who is a, uh, comedian and actor from the UK. And he was in this TV show called red dwarf, which is a really great comedy show, science fiction, comedy show. And Chris Barry played the character of Rimmer.

Again, I'm talking about something that almost all my listeners will definitely not know about. But for British people of our generation, uh, Rimmer, uh, is a character we all know from red dwarf and the actor, Chris Barry, very well and he also played this character, uh, called, uh, uh, uh, Britas. Uh, what was his first name? Can't remember.

Um, I've got to, I've got to, I've got to Google it. Um, quality content. It's kind of like, yeah.

Luke Google, explaining the British empire to people around the world. Exactly. Gordon Britas.

So Gordon Britas was a sort of precursor to Alan Partridge in many ways. Right. You know, quite similar.

No one will know. No one will know except hardcore listeners of my podcast, because I've, I have done episodes about Partridge before. Uh, but anyway, anyway, he's a, uh, Britas, the character of Gordon Britas was a sort of, uh, very, uh, annoying, um, manager.

Um, who is a silly man, a silly, arrogant, small minded. That's what you want it to be. No, that's just what everyone thinks.

When I, whenever I say, yeah, I want it to be a sports centre manager. Oh, Gordon Britas is a very unusual choice though. May I say, you know, most kids would think, well, I love football.

I want to be a footballer, but you didn't, you know, I, I just, I want to imagine that the, the careers advisor, that guy, was it a guy or a woman who did you remember, I think it was a woman, a woman. Can you imagine her going home in the evening and talking to her partner? And, you know, now that we're both teachers, we know that you go home and talk to your other half about, um, you know, things that have happened in the day and I'm saying, you know, I thought I've had, I thought I've heard it all before because I, every day I hear people say, I want to be an astronaut. I want to be a train driver.

I want to be a fireman. And I thought I'd heard it all. But today I met this kid, he wanted to be the, he wanted to be the manager of a leisure centre.

And the husband goes, what? Like Gordon Britas from the Brita's empire. Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

I wasn't a brilliant footballer. I was a goalkeeper actually. I did play, there's another story.

There's another story. I was a goalkeeper. I was not bad.

I was, I was actually pretty good. Um, especially at five aside that that was my, that was the best form of football five aside, because, um, I wasn't very good in the air as a goalkeeper, but I was a very good, I was a very athletic cat like, um, goalkeeper who with quick reflexes and good at shop, stopping shots and good at sort of, uh, when players were running towards me, I could like close them down quite well and things like that. So I was, I was a goalkeeper.

15 years old. And I played with the kind of local youth sort of team in my village, which as you can imagine was a very small thing. Uh, but I was there and I, and, and, uh, I also used to go to sort of football camps, um, in the school holidays and stuff.

And at the football camps where none of the other kids from my, it was a totally different school, totally different place. So I didn't know anyone. And they nicknamed me the barrier.

Um, because I was so good at stopping shots, you know, in a five aside situation with a small goal, but I was pretty good and I won player of the year one year for goalkeeping record. So I wanted to be a goalkeeper actually. Um, and in this little village, um, there was a, there was a Sunday league adults football team, Chad weekend football club.

Okay. Chad weekend FC. And they were a bunch of, I mean, if you could imagine what these guys were like, they were, so they would, they would, they wouldn't maybe the lowest team in the, in the league that they were in.

And, uh, they would like these guys from different little towns nearby. And they would turn up on a Sunday morning, hung over usually. And they'd be like smoking cigarettes on the side of the pitch, spitting and swearing and fighting on the field and stuff like that.

And this team and every now and then I'd go down and, you know, with my little friends, we would hang around at the back, kicking a ball around and their goalkeeper was rubbish, absolutely rubbish. And one day he just left and they needed a goalkeeper. They didn't have one and they were desperate and they, they were so desperate, they got me to be the goalkeeper.

I was 15 and I became the goalie for this adult Sunday league football team. Brilliant. Yeah.

Oh my God. We used to lose matches like eight nil, nine nil. That's the kind of level that we're at.

And that makes it seem like my goalkeeping record was appalling. Right. It seems like I was, but the number of shots that I would stop, yeah, I'd let in eight goals, but I would still be somehow the best I'd do the best performance on our team, you know, I'd be saving shots left, right, and centre.

Um, again, I wasn't very good in the air. I wasn't, you know, goalkeepers have to be very physical. They have to like physically dominate their six yard box.

Um, and I wasn't, I was like this little kid and, and other players would bump into me and I'd fall over, you know, like a, you must've been half their size at that age, if you were playing adult, you know, guys, you can't be kind of a young lad in goal at 15. Yeah. I, I, I wasn't big and bulky.

So I went down pretty easily and several times, uh, players from the other team would like knock me down. And then the other, the, the players from my team, like they would all gather around and they'd be like defending me and there'd be nearly a fight. You know, that thing that men do, they, they, they stand up in front of each other and put their foreheads.

They press their forehead into the other person's forehead, you know, all that sort of thing was going on. And I'm just standing there like, it's all right, it's all right, it's all right. Yeah.

I played Sunday league in Southwest London for five or six years. Terrible, um, terrible people. You play these teams of pubs, you know, we play the red lion and then next week, who are we playing next week? Oh, we're playing the rising sun or the, you know, the green dragon or whatever.

And, uh, just, uh, yeah, we, we were known in our league. One day the re one of the referees told us, do you know what you're called in the league? We're like, what? And they, I don't know. Can I swear on this? Yeah.

He said, Oh yeah. In the league you're. And he just said it totally like, well, he wasn't embarrassed at all.

He just said, Oh yeah. In the league, you're just known as posh student wankers. Posh student wankers.

That's what you were known as your team. Yeah. Nice.

Anyway, Sunday league football in the UK is a whole so much to make a film or a book about that because that is a world in itself. I would say 90% of people playing on Sunday morning are playing with a terrible hangover. Yeah.

They're not great athletes. Usually certainly the way it used to be. There are actually a few quite interesting YouTube channels, which cover Sunday league football and the good ones do prioritise a lot of the drama and the personalities and stuff.

Uh, there's a lot of, so you can look that up, look up Sunday league football on in the UK on YouTube, you might be actually actually be able to see what we're talking about. Yeah, you, I'm linking in my next question. You didn't have a hangover because you've already said you weren't getting out and getting drunk as a 15 year old, you were a good boy.

So did, did, when did that start or, you know, was it after school, was it only university when you started, uh, doing, doing things like that? So, yeah. Um, uh, secondary school, as you know, Martin finishes when you're 16. And, uh, all children in the UK have the option to leave school at 16 if they want and go on to get a job or do whatever, or you can continue your education.

Um, and there's various ways, directions you can go in terms of continuing your education. But most kids will go on to, uh, what we call sixth form or college to study a levels. That's just the next level of qualification, which then is a kind of a bridge to university basically.

So normally for two years you study a levels. Um, and that's normally when, when I was at college, you just had three, most people did three, maybe four a levels, um, in order to get into university. These days they do AS levels and I think there's twice as many maybe, but anyway.

Um, so you, you kind of narrow down your focus, focus on a few specific subjects. And, uh, one of the other things about sixth form college is that, uh, um, uh, you're treated more like an adult because you, you, you leave school, go to a completely different institution where everyone is above the age of 16. Um, and so you're treated, you're given a bit more independence.

And I remember on day one, they told us lots of things, but I think maybe the only thing I remember was, well, you know, there's no, you don't have to come to every class, right? You don't have to come to every class. Kids. Um, and I, I, that really, really stuck with me.

You don't have to come to every class. You can imagine that echoing through my mind. You don't have to come to every class.

You don't have to come to every class. And meanwhile, the, whoever's talking is still saying a lot of other stuff, but it's obviously very important that you've bubble bubble bar, and you've got to come to a certain number. There are no bells.

There's no bell that rings to announce the beginning of class. You just have to know when it starts. And you don't have to come to every class, but there's like, I don't have to come to every class.

I can, there's no bell. There's no uniform as well. Cause at school you had to wear a uniform, sixth form college, no uniform.

And also everyone's 16, 17, 18. And a lot of the, some of the kids at the sixth form were my brother's friends. He's just two, just slightly more than two years older than me.

Right. So he went to this sixth form and then the year that I joined is the year that he left and went to university. But a lot of the friends he'd made there that were a year younger than him were still there.

So I went in with this sort of oven baked group of friends that I'd kind of started to get to know through my brother. And it was like a totally new thing for me. And I left my old kind of left my old group of friends behind.

Although some of them came to that sixth form as well, but I sort of like left the old Luke behind. And like during the summer between leaving school and

starting sixth form, I sort of came out of myself. Somehow I kind of grew up, unlocked a new level or something like that.

And, um, uh, suddenly became completely disinterested in football. Um, being a goalkeeper was just suddenly not really worth the effort. And it was all music and clothes and all that stuff and going to the pub.

And I had my first experiences with going to the pub, like ordering a pint when you're not really old enough, but you get one and then you're there with your pine and you're like, Whoa, this is great. And getting a little bit drunk and sudden and being in a band, I got into a band and stuff. And so, yeah, that's when all of that sort of thing started.

Um, 16, 17, uh, 18. Yeah. So excellent.

Were you, uh, were you ever a naughty boy? Did you ever get in trouble for anything? Um, so let's, we'll go back. I feel like, uh, sixth form was kind of like when I started to become an adult and since, well, technically I was still a child, I think I was probably still a child until maybe a few minutes ago. Um, I'm not sure if I've even grown up now, but, um, so, uh, if we think about earlier than sixth form college, um, yeah, I did get into trouble a bit.

I was, I was generally a good boy and I didn't get into a lot of trouble really. Um, there's a couple of occasions. So one, when I was really small, I must've been, I think it was preschool.

So I must've been about four, three or four years old. Okay. And I had a best friend called Robert who was the same age as me.

And Robert was a bit more naughty than I was. Um, and so maybe he would kind of be the leader and I would kind of, he would lead me astray and nothing too bad, but he just sort of, I don't know, just got up to things that he shouldn't have got up to. Um, and, uh, one time I remember my mom and his mom were friends.

So I would go around to their house. My mom would bring me around and they would, the two moms would be chatting, having a cup of tea. And one day Roberts, we were in the garden.

Robert said, Oh, come around the back of the house and look at this. And we went around the back of the house and there was this fence. Right.

That sort of divided his garden with the next person's garden. If the, at the back of their garden, there was this fence, the back of his house and the back of his neighbour's garden, this fence, and it was like this old kind of wooden fence, but the wooden slats had started to get really, really old and dry. And he'd realised that if you kicked it, even look, even slightly, even likely, if you kind of tapped it with your foot, the wood would just break away really easily.

And he said, look at this, you can do this. And he's, I don't, I don't know if he ever said, Oh, we can do this. We're, we're allowed to do this.

I don't know if he actually said that, but I distinctly remember the feeling of like, Oh, this is fine. We can do this. This is fine.

He he's just doing it. So, Oh, so we can do this. Like I just, for some reason, imagine or thought that there was permission, you know, and, and so we just kicked this fence to pieces, the two of us.

You just stood there, these two little boys just kick, kick, absolutely obliterating the sort of bottom half of this fence. And we, I don't know how long we were doing it, but then the two mums turned up, came around the corner of the house and like, what are you doing? What have you, what are you doing? And we got into huge trouble because we'd essentially just completely vandalised, um, this fence. They probably needed a new fence anyway, by the sound of it.

So yeah, I think so. Wasn't the worst crime. Yeah.

We just started the job, started the job and let the professionals finish it off. Um, there was that. And then there was an incident when I was older, uh, well, 12, 13 years old.

My brother was, you know, a couple of years older than me. He was really into skateboarding. I was kind of into skateboarding as well.

And, uh, he, he was old enough to go into Birmingham and he had a group of skateboarding friends. And he would go into Birmingham and meet up with all his skater friends. And they would find places in the city to go skating.

You know, you're talking about steps or curbs or any concrete area where you can skate around. And they discovered this, this indoor shopping centre, this kind of old indoor shopping centre with an area with some curbs and steps that not many people used. And so we went there and we were skating around in the shopping centre, doing little grinds on the curbs and kind of popping off the steps and things.

And we thought we were just having a fine little time, but clearly someone found it really egregious and antisocial and they called the police. And so we were just skating around and suddenly a riot van, this is a large van, uh, sort of armoured, you know, with, with, with protection on the back window and stuff. A right van to, I remember it as a riot van, maybe it was just a police van.

But a riot, a police van pulled up just in the entrance to this shopping centre. And loads of police all jumped out and came surging towards us. And, you know, 12, 13 year old me, I picked up my skateboard or, uh, like this and all the other kids just instantly ran, just scattered.

And I swear as the youngest little kid there, I had no idea. I had, I was not street wise in any way at all. I just stood there with my skateboard while everyone ran away as the police came running towards us.

And I made a panic attempt to escape. And I just sort of wandered up to the stairs and started climbing, started climbing the stairs to get out of this, this shopping centre. This is the old concrete shopping centre.

And, uh, I felt a hand come down on my shoulder. It was like this policeman. All right.

Where do you think you're going, Sonny? You know? And I turned around tears streaming down my face. Oh, he turned me around and I was just a crying mess there. And he took pity on me and he's like, Oh, you're on mate.

You can go. He just let me go. And I, and I went up the stairs crying, you know, I didn't know what to do with myself.

And then I was alone in Birmingham, you know, on my own scary. Yeah. Oh no.

Oh, where is everyone? And the idea of being arrested by the police was much was, was not as bad as just being lost on my own in Birmingham. So I went around, looked for where everyone had gone and I kind of walked around a few corners and there they all were. All of the escape kids were there lined up against the wall.

My brother was there too. They were all lined up against the wall. The skateboards were all on the floor.

And there was one police officer giving everyone while telling everyone shouting at them all. And I just joined it willingly. Um, you know, uh, I'd be reunited with your brother and his friends.

I sort of sheepishly just put my skateboard down and just went and joined all these kids standing against the wall like that, you know, I was like, Oh, okay. I obviously it was terrible. I knew I was in really big trouble.

The first time I'd ever been sort of stopped by the police for anything. And they gave us a really, really hard time, shouted at us and took our names

down. They couldn't arrest us for anything, but they give you an official warning.

We're taking your names and numbers. We're going to call your parents, all this stuff. And so we just went home.

We took the train home, got home and James and I were like, you know, we'll just tell them straight away. That's the best thing to do is just tell them. And, uh, got in and we said, Oh, we've got something to tell you.

We told them the whole story and my dad bless him. Really angry with the police. Yeah.

Shouted at you like that. That's terrible. You weren't doing anything wrong.

Um, and the police called and my dad spoke to the police and had strong words. Well, good for him. Yeah.

Yeah. Good dad. Well, how crazy does pick on the, you know, the police not got anything better to do than, uh, you know, shout at 12 year old skateboarders, I don't know.

Well, look, you've mentioned having a brother a few times now, your brother, James, he's been on podcast episodes. You've had him on before. In terms of your childhood, what was it like being the little brother, the younger one, did you ever wish there were more or do, were you happy with your position? Or did you wish you were the older one or how did it work being the youngest? Yeah, no, I never wished for more.

Never wished that, uh, I was the older one or anything like that. That was fine. Um, um, I think mostly it was totally fine and great.

I mean, I was lucky to have an older brother, you know, and we, we were, we shared a lot of things and we got on. Well, and I have just lots of really great memories. The two of us, you know, um, uh, were on a very similar wavelength.

We're very close. And so we have a lot of, we had a great childhood. I mean, we, we really did.

We were very lucky, really all things considered. And we had a star Wars toys and we had, you know, we just had a great time playing with playing and enjoying things like different films. And just, we used to hang around together a lot and just play and stuff and have stupid conversations.

You know, we would ask each other questions, just the kinds of stuff we used to talk about. We would just sit in the living room and we would just say to each other things like, can you imagine? What, what would you do? What would you do if that was a good one? What would you do if, um, a bulletproof shark just flew through the window right now? And we would talk about that for ages. You know, all that, that was the level of our conversation.

But I was the younger brother. And some of the time I felt like I was kind of slightly auxiliary to him that he would be doing something and I would just be there, you know? Um, not that my parents made it that way. They always treated, treated us as equally as possible, but naturally things went that way.

So for example, we'd go to the shop on a Saturday and we would buy, or our dad would buy us Airfix, uh, models. Uh, and listeners, if you don't know what they are, these are little plastic, um, normally aeroplanes, um, typically world war two fighter planes, like a Spitfire or a Messerschmitt or something like that. And you, it's in a kit and you break the bits of plastic off this kind of, I don't know what you call it, plastic frame.

You break each part off and then you glue them together with some, some glue. You kind of do it really carefully, glue it all together. And then you, you, you can paint it and then you can stick these little stickers on to give them all of their right.

How do you describe that designs? What are those things? The symbols that go onto plane? Yeah. And in the, in the end, you, you know, you'd come up with a really nice model aeroplane and my brother was particularly good at

doing it, you know, he was able to concentrate and focus his attention really well, he would do his and they'd come out really good. I'd do mine.

There'd be complete gluey mess. You know, none of the bits were stuck together properly. It was just a total mess.

So I actually enjoyed standing next to him. He would sit at his little desk in his bedroom and I, and doing his, and I would just stand next to him, watching him do it. And that was great.

But there was just one thing that was really annoying about my brother. And that was that he would breathe. He would exhale through his nose while he was doing it while he was concentrating, right? So he would be doing it and he'd go, no, I'm going to have to blow my nose before I do this because is my nose clear? I'll edit that.

Yeah. The way he would, he would exhale through his nose in a really annoying way. Well, right.

So he would be concentrating, making his airfix kit and he'd be going. We're not picking it up. Hang on.

Can you hear that? Can you hear that? You can't hear it. Can you? We can hear people. Your mic is so good.

It's designed to not pick up blowing through your nose. Yeah. So you can just imagine someone making an annoying breathing noise through their nose while they do it.

Why would I just be on one hand, on the one hand, enjoying watching him make this plane, but on the other hand, incredibly irritated by the way he was breathing while doing it. I think you sound quite unusual though. All the pairs of brothers that I grew up with, it was just seemed like constant war.

They were just fighting every day was just crying at the end of, you know, parents always having to stop, stop fighting, stop hitting each other. It sounds

like you were unusually, um, you got on unusually well for two boys. Don't get me wrong.

We did fight as well. We definitely did fight quite a lot. Um, and I think I would be the annoying younger brother and my brother, my brother would essentially eventually lose his temper with me, or he would just enjoy kind of picking on me and bullying me a little bit sometimes.

And sometimes he would just do something and then he'd, we'd have a fight and he would win, you know, because he was bigger than me. Um, and that, that happens. We went through phases of getting on each other's nerves and fighting in the back of the car, long drives.

We would really get on each other's nerves and our parents, you know, our mom and dad would get angry with us for fighting and, and stuff like that. And that went on until about, I was about 15, 16 and I was suddenly better at fighting than him because I was the sportsman, you know, and so I was more physically capable and I remember kicking him off the bed once, which was a big moment, he was on top of me trying to attack me somehow, I got my legs underneath him and just boosted my legs out and just kicked him all the way off the end of the bed and slam. He landed on the floor.

I think at this point, my mom or dad came in, what the hell is going on in here? You know? And I was there, I didn't care. Cause I was like, huh? Huh? Now, you know, there you go. Who's the daddy now? Um, but I, yeah, I felt like, um, that was a decisive victory and things were never quite the same after that.

There was another case where he had pinned me to the floor and I got an arm loose and I actually punched him in the face. Wow. Not hard, but not hard, but it was like, I connected a fist to the cheek and he backed off.

Okay. Yeah. Things are what they used to be.

We're in a new world now. The new dynamic. Yeah.

Okay. Have you got brothers and sisters? You've got a sister, you've got a sister, haven't you? Am I imagining that? Uh, three, three much older sisters. So that's just, that's a different thing altogether.

It's like, um, it's like having three extra moms, really. They're just, it's not, they're not the same as, uh, so in some, some ways of being an only child in some ways, but at the, on the other hand, not. So it's best of both worlds, I think.

Okay. Yeah. What, what we'll do when eventually at some point, Barton, now somewhere down the line, after we've done a number of these, we'll turn the tables again and I'll have you back on and I'll just ask you about your own questions or make brand new episodes where you answer the questions that you've asked me, because I'm sure there's a number of different anecdotes and great stories.

Interesting. I think like we're quite similar in some ways, um, in that I also grew up in a, uh, tiny village in the countryside and, um, and then got into bands and all of those, all of those things. But yeah.

Um, but no, the one thing I did not envy my friends about was having brothers cause it seemed like constant warfare, I quite enjoyed not having that. Yeah, no, no, no. There are some miserable times, miserable times when, when he was being quite unfair to me, but you know, then I was probably extremely annoying to him, so, you know, swings around about the wall.

One thing that's not on my list of questions, which we haven't talked about, it's girls, girls. So I went after the age of seven, I went to boys only schools. And, uh, so after school, we went into town in the, in the town where I went to boarding school after school, you went into town and you went to a cafes, like a department store cafes, usually and places like that, or McDonald's or something like that, and then all the girls from the girls school, cause they all went to separate, you know, single set schools.

And that's, that's where you'd make, you buy one cup of tea between five of you, and then you'd sit there with your one cup of tea and make that last three hours and the, uh, the cafe would come around and go eventually kick you out, come on, either buy another tea. And so everyone would like get five P 10 P together and together we collectively now, now there's 30 of us. We can buy one more cup of tea.

What age was this? I guess 14 to 18. That's when that sort of teenage thing. And were you chatting up those girls? Were you just like this group of boys? Like, look at those girls over there.

What should we do? I don't know. Yeah, well, both the useless boys like me, we're just talking to other boys and occasionally looking over and then the, the more capable boys just went and sat with the girls and talk to them. Yeah.

How do they manage to do that? But you didn't have that presumably in a, in a, you went to a mixed, mixed schools all your life. Yes. Always mixed schools.

So did you have friends who were girls or how, how does it, is it still kind of you hang around with just a group of boys? How is it different going to a mixed school? Um, so obviously you're just around girls a lot. And, you know, for example, let's say in that drama class I was in when I was 14, you get put in a group to put on a, to come up with a play and it was a group of some boys and some girls. So, you know, and other situations you just end up, you know, in a group with, with girls and, uh, there's different types of girls.

There's girls who, who, um, are really nice, uh, girls that you're not attracted to, but, uh, really nice and easy to talk to and that you're friends with girls that you are attracted to. And as a result, you can't talk to them, uh, you know, no debt, absolutely no game. You know, you haven't, you have no game at all at that age.

The, the best you can do is just sort of, I don't know, look at them occasionally. Uh, I don't know, just like you just get this feeling of like, it's so

exciting. And, and yet so terrifying at the same time that there's a girl that I really find attractive.

Like for example, if your parents have some of their friends over that you've never really met before, like a weekend where my dad says, Oh, my old colleague, my old university friend I haven't seen for ages is going to come and visit with his wife. They've got two children, you know, two daughters. And then we're, you know, we spend all Saturday with this family in our, at our house.

And let's say, I dunno, 14 or 15 years old or something. And one of the daughters is a similar age. And, you know, I, I think she's really hot, you know, uh, but, but I just would almost be incapable of being near her, you know, it would just be so sort of exciting.

And, uh, um, it was, um, all you managed to say to her was, what would you do if a bulletproof shark, you find yourself with the girl, you know, there's a moment where you're just with them and nothing else is happening. You're like, right. Uh, so, uh, yeah.

Imagine if a bulletproof shock through, through the window right now. Would you, um, would you want a biscuit? Let's talk about TV and films. You used, you said you used to watch the same things with your brother, TV and films, what were the main things you remember in your childhood? So we had, um, we had a box, a plastic box full of, um, VHS cassettes, right? These are video cassettes, listeners.

Um, big black cassette tapes that you'd load into a VHS machine as a video playing machine. I mean, a lot of people listening to this will know exactly what I mean, but for younger listeners, you won't at all. This is pre DVD, right? Um, and it was like a DVD is like a disc with a, with, with a movie on it and you load the disc into the machine, but a video cassette.

Yeah. So, and a lot of them were just films that we'd recorded off the television. Um, and, uh, so we had all these films and recorded TV shows on VHS and we used to watch them over and over and over again.

And so as a result, there are some films that are deeply sort of ingrained within me from having watched them again and again and again, and that includes star wars, uh, the original episode four, right? Star Wars that we've recorded off the TV. We didn't record the other ones off the TV until much later, but the first star wars I've seen so many times, it's like so deeply ingrained Indiana Jones, the last note, Indiana Jones, uh, the first one, um, Superman, the original 1970s Superman film, um, uh, the Beatles, yellow submarine, uh, the Rutles, um, document, uh, comedy documentary by Eric Idle. One of the Monty Python guys.

Uh, what else do we have? Um, those are some of the main ones. And one of the things we had, we had, um, another film we had was, uh, clash of the Titans, which was a great sort of, um, is it Greek mythology or Roman mythology? Uh, one of the, yeah, it's like, is that Jason and the Argonauts? Is that, is that different? This is similar and stuff like that, right? It's fighting. It's sort of the famous pre AI scale and animated skeletons fighting those guys.

Yeah. That kind of thing. If there weren't animated skeleton.

So it's Ray Harryhausen was the, was the science fiction was the special effects supervisor and animator Ray Harryhausen who did do, I think it was Jason and the Argonauts, which had that famous scene of them. Yeah. Animated skeletons, which I remember seeing a clip of that on TV once and thinking it was just the most amazing.

What's that? How can we see that? That's amazing. Uh, but, um, clash of the Titans had a lot of that and there was, there was a Medusa, uh, animated by Ray Harryhausen, really terrifying, really well done. Some of that stuff was too, too scary for me to watch when I was a kid.

Yeah. Well, it started out as too scary, too scary. It started out as too scary, but James and I would watch the video again and again, and we would choose specifically to watch the scary bits and our VHS recorder had a pause button.

Right. So you'd get to a bit that was scary and you'd press pause and the image would obviously just stop, but there'd be like wavy lines are on the screen, but you could pretty much pause the image and then you could jog the image forward frame by frame. Right.

So we would get to the scare, the thing that had scared us before, like the bit where you see Medusa's face up close for a moment, and we would be so scared by that, but then we would rewind it later and pause that and jog it forward and see really, really in detail how they'd done it and what it looked like and stuff, and we did that to so many films, so many moments in films, pausing it and creeping the video forward to have a really good look at what we'd seen. Um, for example, at the end of Indiana Jones, you know, the bit where those, that all the Nazis open up the arc of the covenant to discover the 10 commandments, but it's just sad face melts evil spirits come out and the, and the spirits kill all the Nazis. And you see these like really grotesque deaths, like the, one of them melts and one of them is head just explodes.

They're really violent, like ultraviolet stuff. And we pause the hell out of those bits and jobs through them. And, oh yes.

So they weren't so scary if you watch them frame by frame. That's right. No, you kind of, yeah, you, you take away the fear and you, you realise you start to get curious about how they've done it.

My brother was particularly interested in the sort of the, um, the mechanics of, of, of how they did the special effects and things like that. That was, that was really cool. Um, but then it's cool.

And then cinema, we went to the cinema, we saw a lot of the big things like back to the future. E.T. Return of the Jedi, Jurassic Park, things like that. It was a great time, the eighties for, for films.

Did you have a kind of routine of TV watching? I feel like in the UK we're more interested in watching TV than any, any other European country anyway, maybe because TV in other countries, I'm sorry, generally not, not great or that they don't have a, maybe it's different now with everything just available

all the time. But when we were young, there were a limited number of channels and between sort of three o'clock or half three from basically when schools all over the country finished until about six o'clock, there was just children's TV was just on. So you got home from school and you watched this and then you watched this and then you watched one more and then it was the news and now it's as boring.

Adult TV is back on again, but there was like the afternoon was set aside for just kids and we all, all over the country, all watched the same thing. So these blue Peter was a classic children's programme, which covered all sorts of different things, how to make things interesting places they visited and things like that. That was a real routine for me.

I came home from school. My mom gave me some toast. I watched this and then I watched this and I hate, I hated this one, but I really liked this one.

What was, what did you have that kind of routine? Exactly the same, exactly the same. We'd come home and probably have a snack, have tea, maybe we'd probably eat about six properly, but you had to have a snack and then we would sit and watch blue Peter, definitely Grange Hill, which was just a sort of soap opera drama series set in a school. And we all knew all the characters and some of those storylines are actually iconic moments in British culture.

You know, characters like Zamo and other characters. It's actually so in a, to an extent, quite hard hitting drama, some of it. Um, but, um, yeah, all of those programmes, a lot of animation programmes, cartoons, um, and trying to think what our favourite ones were.

There was a show called the trap door. Do you remember the trap door? No, I might be a bit older. Yeah.

The trap door was basically about a little blue carrot, little blue. It was animated with plasticine, plasticine animation. So really well-made, but really must've taken a long time.

Um, and stop motion animation. It was about this little blue guy who lived in the basement of a castle and he was the servant of a monster called the thing upstairs. You never actually see the thing upstairs.

You just hear his voice. So these blue guys called Burke. And every now and then you'd hear this big voice, Burke feed me.

And then Burke has to go around and find some food for his and there's a trap door in the middle of the room. And it's like the whole point of the show is like, don't open the trap door because there are creepy things in there. And he, every time he has to open the trap door to try to solve some problem, he's like, well, let's just look in the trap door and then some horrible monster comes out and he spends the five minute episode struggling to get it back in the trap door.

And it was really good. It was really well-made. There's a lot of talk now, isn't there, about this sort of lack of shared cultural experience that we all, we all watch the same things.

So we, we always used to go to the, first of all, when you're a child in the playground, everyone's just talking about the same things. And then when you're an adult, you're in the pub talking about the same TV series or whatever that doesn't happen so much now. I don't know.

Maybe there were different things. What with your children now, what are the main sort of differences between their childhood and your childhood? Do you try and follow your parents? Examples in some ways, and it's really hard to tell because, you know, we're in a different country. Yeah.

Everything seems to be so different. It's really hard to find. If it, if we're in the same country, similar situation, but like, you know, whatever it is, 30, 40 years later, they would be easier to answer that question, but that's really hard to say.

Um, because obviously there's all this extra cultural difference added, you know, the fact we're in France. But if we just talk about the TV, yes, we don't,

they don't watch TV. I mean, there is French TV, but as you said, I mean, I think it's not all that great, you know? Um, there are cartoons that you can find on French TV.

It's all right, but no, they, they watch TV on our laptops and on an iPad. So we get home, I take my son home from his, his childcare and he, I let him watch stuff on an iPad while I, you know, maybe prepare some food for him. And so they, the, the, the shows that we all know about in the house are things like poor patrol, which is a bunch of dogs that know all about Paul patrol, which I mean, gosh, the talk for an hour is just about that.

Um, like dogs rescuing, just dogs dealing with emergencies that, um, and, um, I think my favourite one is called Simon. It's about this little bunny rabbit and it's just everyday life. It's really good.

Right. It's just Simon deals. It's just normal life, which is fine.

It's not, he's not, he's not, you know, an astronaut or policeman or something. It's just a little kid. Uh, it's good.

And my son loves Simon and laughs at it and stuff. Um, other ones are, um, I don't know. There's like ones about there's tonnes of stuff.

So I don't have kids, you see. So I don't, I only hear these things secondhand. What's bluey.

Louie. Yeah. I've heard the bluey is one of the best ones actually.

Um, you know, in terms of British thing or is that American or French? I think it's British. I think you can get it on the BBC iPlayer. I think it's British.

I'm not entirely sure. A lot of these shows are there's versions in different languages. You know, of course, like on Netflix, you watch a show, you can change the language, but you can also often, you can change between British English and American English.

So you can watch Paw Patrol in quotes, American English, although I think it's technically Canadian. Um, and then you can switch it to British English as well, where the characters, so the, like the character of Mayor Humdinger in American is like, I'm Mayor Humdinger and I speak like this. Paw Patrol, you have to help me.

And then in English, he's like, I'm Mayor Humdinger and I need help. You know, help me Paw Patrol. It's um, yeah, it's, it's pretty funny, really.

Yeah. There's bluey is apparently good, but we haven't managed to find a convenient way of watching it. I need to like get a VPN on my, my iPad and then turn it on and then connect to the iPlayer and stuff.

Sometimes that just takes too long and just like quick, get something on the iPad now. Um, and so we often go to Netflix. You watch the shows about dinosaurs and little cars that have faces.

I hope this, I hope it's the official merchandise and not unofficial because that can be terrifying. He doesn't seem to, he doesn't seem scared, so it's all right. Well, look, Martin, that was really fun.

Uh, I feel like that was quite an intense conversation because there were so many vivid memory. Yeah. A lot of vivid memories, a lot of kind of funny things.

I wonder if listeners, how did you, what did you think as you listened to this? Do you, I dunno, I think I probably had a fairly normal childhood. Maybe the way I describe it is a little bit intense. Um, I don't know, but it was really fun to kind of have a nostalgia trip.

Thanks, Martin. No worries. It was good.

I hope it wasn't too much like a sort of, sometimes felt a bit like a therapy session with a psychiatrist. So tell me about your childhood. It was a little bit.

That's all right. Like you probably need to go and sit down and have a cup of tea now. And, um, sort of, yeah, I just got that out of my system.

That was the way I answered the questions. I think I chose to get extra specific. Didn't I? Yeah.

Yeah. Get your, um, your, if your viewers, listeners have any other ideas they should, um, for topics we can talk about, cause that was a good one.

I think that was a good one. Thank you very much, Martin, for the questions. Um, I really enjoyed doing that.

Um, and yeah, let's do another one of these. Let's do another one of these soon. Let's see.

Let's see what the listeners suggest. Let's see what other ideas we have. Uh, but it'll be fun to do another one.

Thanks a lot. Thanks Luke. Cheers.

Cheers.

Ending

Right. So that is the end of that.

Thank you again to Martin, um, for coming up with all the questions and also just being a kind of a wonderful guest host on the show, uh, giving me all that time to speak and listening and being willing to just kind of, uh, give me freedom to ramble on my own podcast. I really appreciate it. Um, I really enjoyed this episode.

Um, Martin at the end there mentioned that he felt like it's, it started to sound a bit like a therapy session. So tell me about your childhood, you know, but I think that's good actually. I think that, um, getting specific and kind of going into detail about stories from childhood is actually a fascinating subject.

I'd love to know if you have any similar anecdotes, uh, anything that you heard in this episode, did it kind of, um, strike a chord with you at all? Uh, did you, do you find any parallels with your childhood as well? You can let us know in the comments section, uh, but I've really enjoyed this and I, the plan is certainly to do more of these with this format with Martin preparing some questions and then asking me, I think it's a good format. Martin is a great foil for me. Um, meaning that he's, yeah, I mean, I think that we're on the same wavelength in many ways.

We had a similar upbringing of the similar generation. Uh, we have similar tastes in music and stuff like that. And, um, a similar sense of humour also being an English teacher, just like me.

Um, we worked together for many years. We did the same qualifications together. So we've gone through exactly a very similar career path.

And as a result, I think Martin knows exactly what I'm trying to do with these episodes. So it's great to have him on board and a really great addition to the, what shall I call it? The pantheon of recurring guests that I have on this show. So we will be doing more of these.

Uh, I am quite serious about at some point turning the tables again and actually asking Martin the questions that he asked me, because obviously it's all me, me, me in, in these episodes. But I think that Martin has got some really funny stories to tell as well. So plenty of room, but this format has got legs.

I think, um, it can go far. Um, so yes, as I said before, there is a premium episode for this. Check it out.

It's the usual broad range of vocabulary taken from the conversation, including fixed expressions, phrasal verbs, the kind of English that's very common in natural native level conversation. Let me help you learn to speak English. Like me check out LEP premium, especially the episode, uh, the vocab review, or is it a vocab preview? There'll be something to help you extract vocab and acquire it, learn it, use it, remember it, use it again.

LEP premium, teacherluke.co.uk/premium

So when am I publishing this? It's a couple of weeks after I'm actually recording it. Um, and what's going on in podcast land.

Summer is here very much so. And basically I've run out of time. Um, I've, I've run out of time.

The kids are off school. And so this is when it's really hard to get podcast stuff done. Normally I'm pretty organised and managed to pre-record loads of episodes in the run-up to the summer holidays.

And then I kind of published those episodes that I've recorded, but I'm, my back is against the wall in terms of time. Um, it's been a very busy summer. There's also been heat waves, which have made it really hard to get things done.

It's just almost impossible to sit here in my podcasting room when it's 40 degrees plus and podcast like normal. Instead you have to spend time surviving, essentially trying to do very little and just trying to get through the hot weather. I mean, it's, it's terrible, isn't it? What a, what a, what a terrible situation we're in.

Um, but basically what I'm trying to say is that yes, as summer has arrived and I've run out of time, I'm not entirely sure what my publishing schedule will be, uh, for the summer and certainly until the beginning of September. Um, you know, I will be recording episodes in spare moments. I won't have nearly as much time to prepare them and edit them as I do at the moment.

Um, my family and I will be spending the entire month of August and some parts of July in the French countryside on holiday. Uh, we're renting a house in the countryside a few hours away from Paris. This is a little, uh, haven for us where the children can play in the garden.

We can relax. We can take day trips to interesting places. We can go to Saturday afternoon markets and pick up local French, uh, products like cheese and delicious fruit and veg and, uh, other, other things.

Um, we're going to generally take things very slowly and have some healthy time in the fresh air. Uh, no big adventure to a remote cabin in the Norwegian wilderness for us this year. That's what we did last time.

Of course. No, this year we are staying rooted here in France, sampling some of the slow life of the French countryside, listening to the birds singing, taking walks to visit the nearby horse stables, spotting different animals, playing games, maybe even taking day trips to the beach. But, but that's a lot of time away from my podcasting room in a house with two loud children.

Will I get any podcasting done? Honestly, I have no idea. I don't know. So I'm going to be just recording and uploading podcasts on a completely ad hoc basis.

I will try to keep them coming regularly, but I can't promise anything. So there you go. You'll have to just kind of, um, uh, what, uh, be a little tolerant.

Um, if you don't get the same regular episodes with the same level of professional preparation that you've come to expect from this podcast, um, I need to prepare for episode 1000 because I feel like that should be, there's something vaguely special, but I, am I ready? No, I'm not. Um, I wanted to do an episode featuring lots of short conversations with guests that I've had on the podcast over the years, some sort of big party, like LEP party where different guests are on. It's, um, you hear lots of familiar voices.

I don't know how I'm going to do that because that's going to take a massive amount of organising just to organise the recordings and then edit them together and put them all together. I don't know how I'm going to do that. But at this rate, episode 1000 might be a solo ramble.

I think it's due to arrive, um, in terms of episode numbers somewhere in August, maybe mid August. But as I said, that's going to be peak holiday season. So I've got no idea how I'm going to deal with that.

Maybe the most efficient and effective thing to do would just be a simple solo rambling episode where I can just improvise. I mean, improvisation in episodes of this podcast can be great. Um, I think it's a hallmark of the show, the kind of rambling, spontaneous, uh, speaking.

And I think that those episodes are probably the most popular episodes, to be honest, the ones that are completely made up on the spot. It seems, you know, over the years of doing this, I've developed a way of recording like that. So this podcast has got various gears, you know, like, like gears on a car.

Um, it's got various gears. So I can shift into a gear, which is, I don't know, like four wheel drive, you know, if we're going to off road, if we're going to go off road here, uh, I can kind of go into a four on all wheel drive gear where I'm just kind of improvising in the moment. Maybe you'll get some podcasts like that, uh, during the summer.

I don't know, but, um, you'll have to just sort of bear with me basically. Anyway, I better stop now. I hope you enjoyed this.

I really do. I really enjoyed it. I think there were lots of funny moments.

Please do comment in the comment section. That's always good. Like and subscribe.

If you have, if you're not already subscribed to this podcast, make sure you smash that like button or simply click it and click the bell icon as well to get all those notifications whenever I upload new stuff. And my uploading might not be as regular as before. Every Monday you might get sort of episodes randomly at different times of the day or week.

But like and subscribe. Tell your friends if you like the podcast, please do leave me a positive review wherever you listen to this. For example, on Apple podcasts, I really still need to appeal to new listeners.

The podcasting market is very crowded these days. When I first started doing this, there were only a handful of podcasts for learners of English. In fact, almost none.

These days, every man and his dog's got a podcast for learners of English. So it's a very crowded market. So I have to make sure I'm still visible and that I still appeal to new listeners.

And part of that is about stimulating the algorithm with things like regular reviews coming from listeners and ratings and the podcast simply being shared with friends. That can really, really help listeners in China. Hello to you.

It seems that my podcast on Apple podcasts is still blocked in China. So if you're in China and you can't find the podcast in Apple podcasts, but it won't work. It won't play.

Now, this is nothing to do with me. It's been blocked by the authorities in China. As far as I'm aware, the Chinese government has filtered my podcast and prevented it from being played.

And so I'm not sure why that is. Maybe it's just because I've mentioned certain subjects. I don't know.

I don't think it's particularly controversial. But if you're a listener from China and you can't listen in Apple podcasts, how am I going to get this message to those people? I don't know. But please don't leave a one star review complaining that you can't listen to the podcast with Apple because it's not my fault.

It's nothing to do with me. It's the government who've decided to prevent you from hearing it because it's just so dangerous to listen to Luke's English podcast. It's very annoying.

It's also annoying that some people are commenting with one star saying this podcast doesn't work, you know, blah, blah, blah. And people email me saying maybe you need to change some settings. It is nothing to do with me.

All my settings are correct. It's it's it's on the other end that it's being blocked for some reason. So it's annoying.

If you're using a VPN, then I think that's a good way to get around it. Yeah. So there you go.

Like and subscribe. Leave a comment. Tell your friends.

Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Luke's English podcast. And I will speak to you again in the next one. I hope you have a lovely morning, afternoon, evening or night wherever you are in the world, whatever you happen to be doing with yourself at this particular moment.

OK, speak to you soon. But for now, good. But for now, what happened to my voice? Speak to you soon. But speak to you soon. But for now, it's just time to say goodbye. Bye bye bye bye bye bye.